

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

**Tuesday, May 3, 2022
1:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall**

Present: Chair Rob Wright, Kathryn Garcia, Ad-Hoc Member Patricia Losik (acting as alternate) and Planning Administrator Kim Reed

I. Call to Order

Chair Wright called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

Patricia Losik was seated for the meeting.

II. Scope of work clarification for next steps

a. Julie LaBranche services

Chair Wright noted that Julie LaBranche provided the Committee with an estimate for her effort and the costs associated with getting the request for qualifications (RFQ) for the Master Plan. He asked the Committee for their thoughts and comments.

Planning Administrator Reed reviewed the estimate for the committee:

- Three meetings with the LRP Committee including presentation – 10hrs
- Gathering information to create a funding level estimate for RFP - 5hrs
- Two additional meetings & follow up review with LRPC by 9/10/2022
- Draft RFP – 18hrs
- Finalize RFP – 6hrs

Total Budget: \$2,940.00

Planning Administrator commented that she thinks there's more in this quote than what needs to be done. In going through the quote, she's not sure Ms. LaBranche actually needs three meetings with the LRP Committee, as she was there for the visioning and knows where they are going with this process. In regards to "gathering information to create a funding level estimate", the LRP Committee has enough information on other towns. Administrator Reed also commented that she would like to see this work done sooner than September 10th.

Member Losik pointed out that the Committee had discussions about request for qualifications (RFQ) versus request for proposal (RFP). It sounds like this is going right to an RFP. There was a note in one of Ms. LaBranche's emails that said "draft an RFP to support the dollar amount being requested and define the scope of the project, which will go a long way toward gaining Budget Committee support." She asked the Committee if they have taken RFQ off the table.

Administrator Reed replied that she thinks they are going to ask for qualifications in the RFP.

Chair Wright noted that he thought they were asking for a budgetary estimate for what it would cost, so it could be floated to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Administrator Reed explained that the RFQ doesn't give information about funding. It just gives the firms' qualifications and what they are capable of doing. Referring to Ms. LaBranche's quote, Administrator Reed commented that \$3,000 is not that high, but maybe all those meetings are not needed. She suggested that Ms. LaBranche write the RFP. The Committee could review it and finalize it.

Chair Wright commented that he is not trying to "chisel down" her estimate. However, it seems like the work has been done. The Committee now needs Ms. LaBranche's help with who to go to, along with the process of engaging with a firm.

Administrator Reed commented that they probably don't need three meetings, plus a meeting with the Planning Board. If the Committee approves today, Ms. LaBranche needs to start preparing a list of firms who do this work. The RFP process should start based on Ms. LaBranche's knowledge of what is needed. She could then come to the Committee in June with a list of firms and a draft RFP.

Chair Wright asked if they can engage Ms. LaBranche on a fee for services and have her bill for hours.

Member Losik suggested it should be a "not to exceed" amount.

Planning Administrator Reed suggested they change the scope of service. She will work on a contract with Ms. LaBranche asking her to start engaging with firms between now and June to determine who can do the work and the costs. Ms. LaBranche can then meet with the Committee at their meeting in June with a list of firms and potential cost range. Ms. LaBranche could also bring in a first draft of the RFP at that time.

The Committee agreed. It was also agreed that the letter of understanding should outline the scope of work with a not to exceed number (\$2,940), the timeline and Ms. LaBranche's credentials. Ms. LaBranche's credentials will be posted for the public to show that she has an extensive background in this type of work.

III. Request from Select Board

Chair Wright noted that the Select Board has requested the Committee review a letter from Dominique Winebaum expressing concern about a number of items. He has made some notes on the letter and has shared it with the Committee. He would like to hear the thoughts of the Committee.

Member Garcia stated that she thought Chair Wright did a good job in his response. She agrees with his comments. She didn't think in terms of additions, so she is not prepared to add anything.

Member Losik commented that she wanted to make sure that she understood the process from the Planning Board's perspective. She spent time over the last week reading all the minutes, particularly sorting them by the areas were of concern; such as, how it got to a theme-based and the matters around the survey summaries. Member Losik stated that her feeling is that there was a clear process in regards to all of the discussions, deliberations and decisions. The attendance by the Long Range Planning Subcommittee was generally consistent throughout the process. She felt that the information shows that the work of the Committee satisfied the Rules of Procedure, as adopted by the Rye Planning Board.

Member Losik read from her summarized notes: *In New Hampshire, the master plan is the duty of the planning board covered for planning and land use. The additional guidance comes from these sources: N.H. Department of Business and Economic; Office of Planning and Development; N.H. Regional Planning; N.H. Municipal Association; Regional Planning Commission and other communities. Additionally, Rye's Planning Board has worked extensively with Julie LaBranche on master plan engagement, land development regulations and the MS-4 Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System.*

Member Losik noted that to the extent that questions come up and there's confusion about Julie LaBranche's expertise, it's clear through all the records, which exceeds 125 pages and over a year of meetings. Ms. LaBranche was guiding the Committee. She was patient and getting the resources that were needed. Member Losik stated that her goal was to get a condensed excerpt and summarized content on the 125 pages.

Member Losik pointed out that in 2017, Ms. LaBranche was saying that other communities at that time were going with a more theme-based document, which is different than the traditional master plan. She talked about Portsmouth and Exeter at that time. This stayed in the minds of people who are in planning and the members of the Planning Board at that time.

Member Losik stated that she thinks they should share their comments with the Select Board. There are some questions about a lot of the components. She encourages everyone who is interested in the process to become familiar with the foundations of planning in New Hampshire. The Planning Board has a structure. As a subcommittee of the Planning Board, there are requirements that have to be maintained.

Chair Wright stated that he doesn't see anything that came to the Committee that's actionable. He doesn't disagree with some of the comments that were made in the initial input, but they're out of sequence. They're not there yet. For example, in regards to the notion that a steering committee should be formed right now, best guidance says it's not the right time. He continued that the data is up in a summary format on the Town's website for anyone who would like to see it. The Committee's process is pretty transparent. He thinks they are just moving along and following the process as everyone has agreed to.

Member Garcia commented that process and all the documentation is there. She doesn't know how it could be disputed beyond that.

Member Losik encouraged people to look at what other communities do with their information. There's no question in her mind that the information the Committee gathered will be used and will be key. She pointed out that right now, they have to get to the RFP and get to the consulting arrangement, but then they will be right back at this, presumably after the vote in March of next year. She also pointed out that this process takes a long time. It's not done inside of twelve months.

The Committee agreed to share Chair Wright's thoughts and Member Losik's detailed summary with the Planning Board for discussion at the next full board meeting. Chair Wright will summarize the Committee's thoughts and documents for the Planning Board's review.

Planning Administrator Reed noted that the presentation by Julie LaBranche, the vision framework, timeline and all other documents from the last LRP Committee's work is posted on the Town's website.

- **Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 7th, 10:00 a.m.**

Adjourn

Motion by Kathryn Garcia to adjourn at 1:58 p.m. Seconded by Patricia Losik. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger